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MI Chapter 11

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Chapter 11 introduces MI into the arena of special education. The most compelling portion of the MI theory is that it views the student with special needs as a whole student rather than one with a shortcoming. By being able to focus on the positive aspects of the students disabilities they are now strengths and the student is no longer viewed in the same manner. Figure 11.1 on page 104 effectively outlines this practice by showing the discrepancy in the deficit paradigm and the growth paradigm. Equally as impressive was Figure 11.2 on page 106 that shows how many very accomplished people that have what in previous terms would have been considered deficits. Individuals like Albert Einstein, Itzhak Perlman, Thomas Edison and Stephen Hawking to name a few all had levels of difficulties but were able to overcome them and contribute greatly to society. In the closing sections of the chapter the author delves into the IEP and how they fail to incorporate the student’s strengths to offset the shortcomings. The book asks us to consider the impact of utilizing MI in special education and how it might actually reduce the number of referrals if the student’s strengths are given a chance to offset the deficit. The ability to keep students out of IEPs or by playing to the strengths can have other impacts as well such as increasing self-esteem and increasing student interaction and changing the negative focus on students into a more positive outcome.

This chapter has the potential to serve the biggest impact on our individual classrooms. If we can keep these factors in mind when we are observing our classrooms and the students in those classrooms we may be able to positively impact our students. The students that are currently being labeled as ‘difficult’ or having learning difficulties, this chapter may play a role in getting that student the focus on the positive aspects of their personalities rather than continuing on the negative. The students as well as us as teachers will benefit from seeing the positive impact on those students that are now being dealt with differently. They will have a more positive outlook on schoolwork and about themselves as well.